

Congress of the United States  
Washington, DC 20515

February 22, 2019

President Donald J. Trump  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Ave, NW  
Washington, D.C.

Dear Mr. President:

We are a bipartisan group who attended the Munich Security Conference. We have advocated for a small contingent of American forces to participate as part of an international security presence and applaud your announcement of yesterday.

The rise of the ISIS caliphate left thousands of Iraqis and Syrians dead, and millions more were forced from their homes. Dozens of attacks on the West were plotted from ISIS-held territory.

It is a tremendous accomplishment to defeat the caliphate, and we join you in deep appreciation for the efforts of our military and our allies. Our goal now must be to ensure ISIS is not able to regenerate and pose a threat to American security here at home or abroad.

To that end, we support a small American stabilizing force in Syria. We agree that a stabilizing force, which includes a small contingent of American troops and ground forces from our European allies, is essential to ensure stability and prevent the return of ISIS. It also serves to help set the table for a negotiated settlement to the Syrian war in Geneva.

It was made clear to us in numerous bilateral meetings that our view is widely shared. In light of the announcement to leave behind a small American component of ground forces as part of the stabilizing force, there should be willing European participants.

Like you, we seek to ensure that all of the gains made in Syria are not lost, that ISIS never returns, that Iran is not emboldened, and that we consolidate our gains and ensure the best outcome in Geneva for American interests. Those are all important objectives. An international presence will also help prevent conflict between our NATO ally Turkey and the Syrian Democratic Forces that have been central to the counter-ISIS campaign.

This is very possible with a smart post-caliphate strategy that involves a small American military effort combined with enabling important contributions from our European allies. We support such an effort.

Sincerely,



Senator Lindsey O. Graham



Senator Sheldon Whitehouse

